

**Training Participants:** Adam Vauthier (Workgroup Member-WM), Kim Miske, Austin Lyle, Doug Braun, Chris Kolstad, Kathy Bean (WM), Jack Chambers (WM), Bob Harris (WM), Julia Gustafson, Rebecca Steele, Jan Lombardi, Jim Auer, Tony Dean, Sidney Armstrong

**Grant Review Workgroup Members not Present:** Chas Van Genderen, Karin Olsen Billings

- I. Welcome from Governor's Office of Community Service (OCS)
  - a. Thank you Commissioners for your service on the Grant Review Workgroup
- II. Conflict of Interest (Sid Armstrong)
  - a. Sidney Armstrong, with a background in grand making foundations, explains the importance of awarding grants, reviewing grants carefully, discussing thoroughly, and avoiding conflict of interests in the process.
  - b. What is a conflict of interest?
    - i. A conflict of interest may exist when:
      1. A direct, person, or financial interest of any commissioner or their immediate family competes with the interest of OCS
      2. A Commissioner is also a trustee, officer, or employee of an organization that obtains or seeks fund from OCS
  - c. Commissioners are obligated by:
    - i. Fiduciary responsibility (all funds spent in accordance with highest standards)
    - ii. Loyalty to the Governor's Office of Community Service and the Corporation for National and Community Service (in accepting appointment to the commission)
  - d. Why is it important to have a conflict of interest policy?
    - i. General mistrust of government by some
    - ii. Integrity of the process
    - iii. Level playing field
    - iv. Fair play
    - v. Need to avoid even the appearance of conflict
  - e. Process for Voting
    - i. Commissioner declares conflict
    - ii. Commissioner leaved the room during the discussion of application
    - iii. During voting (in workgroup and full commission), grant application is segregated and voted on separately
    - iv. Commissioner declares abstention from vote
    - v. Abstention is noted in official minutes
  - f. Questions?

- i. How to clear the record or an appearance of a conflict? Answer: Bring it up for discussion and have recorded in the minutes
- ii. If there is a conflict with a workgroup member, how do they rank the applicants? Answer: That applicant will not be ranked by that member, and the member leaves during the final ranking process.

### III. Review and Update on Funding Process (Rebecca Steele)

- a. Funding Stream- Funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service for Competitive AmeriCorps State Programs in Montana
- b. [Timeline](#)- Fall for Competitive Applications, Spring for Formula Applications
- c. Process
  - i. [RFP](#) released in September
  - ii. Technical Assistance Call Oct. 20th
  - iii. Applications received Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> (sent to Commissioners Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>)
  - iv. Review Packet of all applications (Month of November)
  - v. In Person Interviews of applicants in December
  - vi. Workgroup makes Funding Recommendations to Commission
  - vii. Full Commission Meeting Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> – video conference call

### IV. Application Instructions (Tony Dean)

- a. Prior to reading the application instructions it's important to review the NOFO/RFR
- b. NOFO explains different grant types and other key terms that will make reviewing the application instructions easier
- c. Application Instructions are over 60 pages however last 30 pages are less pertinent
  - i. Last 30 pages primarily consist of attachments that are helpful if to an organization who are not using the electronic system (eGrants) to submit their grant
  - ii. Pages 7-12 list the key sections of the application narrative
    - 1. Program Design – 50%
    - 2. Organization Capacity – 25%
    - 3. Budget Adequacy – 25%
  - iii. Pages 21-3- list the detailed budget instructions
    - 1. GOCS does not expect grant reviewers to know if costs are allowable per federal guidelines
    - 2. GOCS does expect grant reviewers to review budgets for funding levels and match amounts --Budget Adequacy
- d. [National Service Terms and Acronyms](#) will be included in your application review packet

### V. Score Sheet (Jim Auer and Rebecca Steele)

- a. Jim prepared score sheets for new full applications and continuation applications

- i. Score sheets include a conflict of interest statement, the scoring method, national criteria, state initiatives and expectations, and a final scoring total page
  - ii. Scoring Method: 0-didn't address the question, 1- did address the question, 2- Shows example how they can/have addressed the question
  - iii. Categories that are not relevant to the applicant will not be scored and will not count against their final score
- b. [Full Application Score Sheet](#)
- c. [Continuation Score Sheet](#)
- d. Montana Initiatives and Expectations
  - i. New Addition: Expand and Promote Volunteerism in Montana
- e. The review process with also contain Staff Analysis and Recommendations which will be given to the commissioners have they have scored the applications
- f. Questions:
  - i. Montana Initiatives and Expectations don't have a numerical score?  
Answer: No, only checks because a program cannot be docked, only rewarded for meeting MT Initiatives and Expectations.

#### VI. Staff Expectations of Commissioners (Julia Gustafson)

- a. Time Commitment
  - i. Application Review
    - 1. Workgroup members have from Nov. 8 to Nov. 30 to review all the applications, complete score sheets, and prepare questions for the interviews
  - ii. Interviews
    - 1. Held Nov. 30 and Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> in Helena- attendance required for all workgroup members
  - iii. Consensus on Funding Recommendations
    - 1. Workgroup deliberates and comes to a consensus on funding recommendations to be presented to the full commission- Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>
  - iv. Full Commission Meeting (video)
    - 1. Held Dec. 10<sup>th</sup> via video conference- full commission will vote on grant review workgroup recommendations
- b. Communication Expectations

#### VII. Wrap Up and Questions (All)

- a. Comment from Jan Lombardi: Please note the review process has changed this year to no longer include a chance for applicants to change the application after receiving feedback from the commission. Applicants will only be able to make formatting changes before the final application is submitted to CNCS.

- b. Questions about the technical assistance call- Can anything be asked during the call, and is the only point staff gives feedback on applications? Answer: Yes, anything can be asked, but technical questions about eGrants will be referred back to Project STAR and yes the call is when staff gives feedback that is available to all applicants. There is no individual advice and feedback given to any applicant.

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